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ABSTRACT

Collaboration as a strategy to improve the instructional effectiveness of a school's faculty is examined in this bulletin. The first of four chapters provides a brief discussion of teacher isolation and its consequences and the positive effects of collaboration on school renewal, teacher satisfaction, teacher learning, cooperation among students, and school governance. The remaining chapters consider steps toward introducing collaboration in schools. These measures include the principal's role in advising teachers, supporting collegiality, and adopting a collaborative management style; the implementation of programs ranging from an organizational development strategy to faculty planning groups; and the practical considerations of time, finances, and training. (34 references) (SI)

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Encouraging School Staff to Collaborate for Instructional Effectiveness

Stuart C. Smith and James J. Scott

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Preface

There are signs that the national school reform effort may focus next on teaching and instruction. After the first wave of reforms concentrated on accountability, testing, and performance incentives and the second wave has sought to restructure the ways schools are run, attention now seems to be coming back to the classroom, where reformers are looking for ways to help teachers provide quality instruction.

As the authors of this Bulletin argue, one determinant of instructional effectiveness is teachers' opportunity to help and learn from one another. They summarize research pointing "to a strong association between collaborative norms/practices and student achievement, school renewal, and teachers' openness to learning." For this reason the fostering of teacher collegiality is one of the major focal points of the latest reform effort.

This Bulletin has been adapted from a book, *The Collaborative School: A Work Environment for Effective Instruction*, that will be copublished by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management at the University of Oregon and the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Stuart C. Smith is editor of OSSC and director of publications of ERIC/CEM. James J. Scott is a research analyst and writer who was commissioned by ERIC/CEM.

Philip K. Piele
Executive Secretary

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Introduction

Consider how the adults in two different kinds of schools interact. In school A, teachers do not discuss with one another their practice of teaching nor do they help one another to improve their skills. The principal's annual visits to the classrooms to evaluate teachers with the district checklist contribute little to teachers' growth. When administrators initiate new programs, teachers respond with apathy or are uncooperative. The faculty seldom unites around any effort to improve the school. A majority of teachers desire increased say in designing the school's instructional program, but a few are content with the status quo.

In contrast to the isolation and fragmentation that characterize school A, teachers in school B feel they are working toward a common goal of school improvement. Teachers observe each other's teaching and strive to help one another improve. Experienced teachers willingly share with new colleagues the practices that have worked effectively for them.

Asked why they function so well as a team, school B's teachers point to the principal, who engenders in them and their students a vision for the school's success and provides the practical support they need to work together. And they point to each other as resources for solving problems. They are proud to take part in decision-making, and they value their control over a portion of the school's instructional budget.

By the available evidence, most schools in this country have more in common with school A than with school B. Prestigious groups such as the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession and the National Governors' Association have drawn attention to several key defects in the typical school's structure: overreliance on bureaucratic rules and regulations, school environments that isolate teachers, evaluation systems that fail to facilitate instructional improvement, lack of teacher involvement in decision-making, and obstacles to cooperation between teachers and administrators.

Propelled by growing awareness of these problems, a rare consensus embracing policy-makers, researchers, professional organizations representing teachers and administrators, and friends of education in the business community is gaining momentum toward reform of school structures. Although everyone agrees changes are needed, a consensus has not yet been

reached on the specific form they should take. Educators are experimenting with a variety of alternatives, all of which accord teachers greater respect as professionals at the same time they induce teachers to cooperate with one another and with administrators on school improvement. These new practices and structures–characteristic of school B–all fit in the broad category of what we term the *collaborative school.*

Neither in theory nor in practice is the collaborative school new. The principles of consultation and teamwork have been advocated by management experts for years and have been successfully applied in the business world. And many characteristics of collaborative schools were highlighted within the past decade by researchers who identified the attributes of effective schools. A number of schools across the country, in fact, can be regarded as collaborative schools. Although the concept itself is not new, the suggestion that collaboration should become the norm for all schools is new.

As the many examples in these pages make clear, there is no one model of the collaborative school. Collaboration describes a range of practices that can involve a handful of teachers or an entire faculty. Although collaboration can be encouraged by formal programs–organizational development, for instance–it cannot be imposed on a faculty or implemented as if it were a new reading series. Collaboration depends inherently on the voluntary effort of professional educators to improve their schools and their own skills through teamwork.

Because the collaborative school is a composite of beliefs and practices, it is easier to describe than to define. Perhaps the best way to characterize the collaborative school is to list its elements:

- the belief, based on effective schools research, that the quality of education is largely determined by what happens at the school site
- the conviction, also supported by research findings, that instruction is most effective in a school environment characterized by norms of collegiality and continuous improvement
- the belief that teachers are professionals who should be given responsibility for the instructional process and held accountable for its outcomes
- the use of a wide range of practices and structures that enable administrators and teachers to work together on school improvement
- the involvement of teachers in decisions about school goals and the means for achieving them

Implicit in these elements is the overriding goal of the collaborative school: educational improvement. Although a host of other benefits may be expected to derive from collaboration–notably, staff harmony, mutual respect between teachers and administrators, and a professional work environment for teachers–its primary rationale is the instructional effectiveness that results

when teachers participate collegially in school improvement and their own professional growth.

In terms of the roles of teachers, several distinguishing marks of collaborative schools are the "critical practices of adaptability" identified by Judith Warren Little (1982):

1. Teachers engage in frequent, continuous, and increasingly concrete and precise talk about teaching practice.
2. Teachers are frequently observed and provided with useful (if potentially frightening) critiques of their teaching.
3. Teachers plan, design, research, evaluate, and prepare teaching materials together.
4. Teachers teach each other the practices of teaching.

Collaboration, then, is intended to facilitate instructional effectiveness. Toward this end, the collaborative relationships have both vertical and horizontal dimensions. That is, administrators cooperate with teachers and teachers cooperate with one another. The collaborative school provides a climate and structure that encourage teachers as professionals to work together and with the principal and other administrators toward school improvement and professional growth.

The focus of this Bulletin, then, is on collaboration as a strategy to improve the instructional effectiveness of a school's faculty. We hope that, as byproducts of this strategy, teachers will be accorded respect as professionals, administrators will sense that their efficacy grows, and all members of the school community will experience the satisfaction of accomplishing important goals through teamwork.

The benefits of collaboration are the subject of chapter 2. Following a brief discussion of teacher isolation and its consequences, we discuss the positive effects of collaboration on school renewal, teacher satisfaction, teacher learning, cooperation among students, and school governance.

The following chapters recommend steps toward introducing collaboration in schools. These measures include the principal's role in advising teachers, supporting collegiality, and adopting a collaborative management style; the implementation of programs ranging from an organizational development strategy to faculty planning groups; and the practical considerations of time, finances, and training.

In sum, this Bulletin examines the defects of the typical school structure, describes the educational benefits of the collaborative approach to schooling, and suggests ideas for introducing those structures in other schools that wish to become more collaborative.

Chapter 1

Collaborative Schools Are Effective Schools

The argument for collaboration in schools is a straightforward one: if teachers and administrators view teaching as a collaborative endeavor, in which administrators work closely with teachers and teachers work closely with one another, then improved teaching and learning will result. In this chapter we consider the evidence in support of this assertion and paint a more detailed picture of collaborative schools in action. To appreciate the benefits of collaboration, it is useful first to review the consequences of the isolated conditions under which most teachers currently teach.

Isolation and Its Costs

One would expect that a profession dedicated to learning would be structured in such a way that its members could learn from one another. In this light, the isolation of teachers from other adults is a glaring anomaly. In most elementary schools teachers seldom have an opportunity to exchange more than a few pleasantries with their colleagues during the course of the working day. Even the lunchbreak—for most professionals a time to socialize with their coworkers—is for most elementary teachers a time to supervise children in the lunchroom or on the playground.

At the secondary level teachers are alloted a preparation period and have other opportunities for more extensive contacts with one another. But when teachers do interact, they are more likely to talk about family matters, sports, and other outside interests than to share their expertise about teaching. This is not to say that teachers' social interactions are without value; as in all occupations, socializing builds camaraderie and helps to relieve the tensions of work. But if teachers interact only on a social level, they cannot contribute to one another's professional growth.

Limits on Growth

Ann Lieberman and Lynne Miller (1984) observe that "it is perhaps the greatest irony—and the greatest tragedy of teaching—that so much is carried on in self-imposed and professionally sanctioned isolation." On *a priori* grounds alone, one is inclined to agree with their statement. If teachers perform their work in isolation, then no teacher can benefit from the help of others. Tom Bird and Judith Warren Little (1986) state the problem succinctly:

> Teachers inherit the same images of teaching that we all do, struggle toward proficiency virtually alone, and accumulate as much skill and wisdom as they can by themselves. Superb teachers leave their marks on all of us. They leave no marks on teaching.

The isolated conditions under which teachers practice their profession impede professional growth by making it difficult for teachers to exchange ideas among themselves and with administrators. After studying teachers in thirty-eight schools, John I. Goodlad (1984) concluded, "The classroom cells in which teachers spend much of their time appear . . . symbolic of their relative isolation from one another and from sources of ideas beyond their own background experience." In a study of teachers in Tucson, Arizona, Joseph B. Shedd (1985) observed that "the relative isolation of teachers—from administrators and, more especially, from each other—is one job feature that complicates and impedes teachers in the performance of their responsibilities."

Isolation compounds the problems that beginning teachers face as they embark on their profession. Drawing on his experience with very young teachers, Seymour B. Sarason (1982) concluded that they "are quite unprepared both for the loneliness of the classroom and the lack of relationships in which questions and problems can be asked and discussed without the fear that the teacher is being evaluated."

Teachers' isolation has serious consequences for the experienced teacher as well as for the novice. Susan J. Rosenholtz (1985) regards isolation as "perhaps the greatest impediment to learning to teach or to improving existing skills" because it forces teachers to learn by trial and error. Where school structures and norms inhibit teachers from assisting one another, they must rely on "their own ability to detect problems and discern solutions." Cut off from exemplary role models, teachers "tend to fall back on models that they recall from their own student days," she says.

Professional Atrophy

The limits that teachers' isolation places on their professional growth explain in part, Rosenholtz suggests, why, in the case of teachers who have worked more than five years, there is little relationship between their years of experience and their effectiveness in the classroom.

> Teachers tend to reach their peak performance after about four or five years; thereafter, perhaps because of little new input, their effectiveness with students actually begins to decline.

In addition to the obvious waste involved when each teacher must learn the craft through his or her own experience, teacher isolation may contribute toward the tendency of teachers to resist changes suggested by educational reformers. Under the best of circumstances, change imposed from (or even suggested by) the outside can be viewed as threatening. And apprehensions about change are reinforced when one must face that change alone.

In contrast to the professional isolation that characterizes perhaps a majority of schools, faculty members in a growing number of schools give and accept advice, share ideas, and work together on school improvement projects.

Benefits of Collaboration

Rosenholtz (1989) may have been the first researcher to attempt a large-scale statistical analysis of the relationship between teacher collaboration and student achievement. Quantitative data gathered from her statewide representative sample of seventy-eight elementary schools in eight school districts show that collaboration is a strong predictor of student achievement gains in reading and math. The gains were measured with one cohort of students from second through fourth grades. A regression analysis performed by Rosenholtz controlled for school socioeconomic status, school size, teacher experience, teachers' verbal ability, and pupil-teacher ratio.

Several case studies and the results of the effective schools research also suggest a correspondence between collaborative norms and improved teaching and learning.

Little (1982) conducted case studies of four schools identified as successful on the basis of student achievement on standardized achievement scores and two schools identified as unsuccessful on the basis of the same criteria. She found that the successful schools were characterized by frequent teacher evaluations and feedback on them, teachers talking with one another about teaching, teachers working together to design their classes, and teachers teaching each other about teaching. All these collaborative practices were conspicuously absent in the unsuccessful schools.

From their review of research on effective schools, Stewart C. Purkey and Marshall S. Smith (1983) identified four process variables that "define the general concept of school culture and climate": collaborative planning and collegial relationships, sense of community, clear goals and high expectations commonly shared, and order and discipline. Concerning the first of these variables, they say:

> Collegiality serves many purposes. Chief among them are that it breaks down barriers between departments and among teachers/administrators, encourages the kind of intellectual sharing that can lead to consensus, and promotes feelings of unity and commonality among the staff.

In Rutter and others' (1979) longitudinal analysis of performance by a group of students in London's innercity schools, the more successful schools were characterized by intellectual sharing, collaborative planning, and collegial work among the teachers.

Teachers' Professional Development

Rosenholtz (1989) analyzed the effect of collaborative norms on teachers' perceptions of teacher learning. She found that teachers felt they continued to learn about their profession throughout their careers where the following conditions existed: schools set clearly defined goals for teaching improvement, principals used teacher evaluations as tools to help teachers improve, principals and faculties shared values about teaching, and collaboration between principals and faculties and among faculty members was the norm. Conversely, where these conditions did not prevail, teachers tended to believe that they had learned all they need to know about teaching within the first few years after entering the profession.

Collaborative settings are particularly beneficial for beginning teachers, as Rosenholtz (1985) explains:

> There is less reason for novices to cover their mistakes and hide their inadequacies in collaborative settings than in isolated ones. Indeed, there are compelling reasons to *disclose* one's early mistakes. For example, the cohesiveness of the faculty impels beginners to become involved in professional discussions. Then, too, novices maximize their own intrinsic rewards when they seek the advice and assistance of others, because better teaching is the result.

To the degree that successful staff development programs and continuous teacher learning have an effect on student achievement, these studies would support the proposition that norms of collaboration contribute to improved teaching and learning. As Roland Barth (1986) points out, "No profession can survive, let alone flourish, when its members are cut off from others and from the rich knowledge base on which success and excellence depend."

Student Cooperation

When teachers do work together, their example encourages students to do the same, as Richard and Patricia Schmuck (forthcoming) explain:

> Teachers who practice communication skills (learned through their involvement in an organizational development project) with one

> another also tend to use similar communication skills with their students in the classroom. Also, teachers who are comfortable cooperating with one another, tend to feel comfortable asking their students to cooperate in the classroom. They view the school as a community of humans engaged in cooperative learning and cooperative development. They believe that power should be shared by all, including the students, and that, whenever possible, decisions should be made by those who will be affected by the decision.

In short, the Schmucks state, a collaborative school climate "sets the stage, facilitates, and makes possible student cooperation in the classroom."

Collegial Management Styles

The merits of participative management—one component of the collaborative school—are the subject of a body of literature too large to be reviewed here. In lieu of such a review, Ruth Bebermeyer (1982) characterizes well the collaborative style of effective instructional leaders:

> What is it that the leader initiates? On closer examination of the indicators of effective leaders, one is attracted to the conclusion that the leader initiates *cooperation*. How? By cooperating—by initiating practices and processes that take into account the desires and dignity of others, whether by shared decision-making, open communication, participative problem-solving or other ways. The leader initiates cooperation not only by personal example but also by establishing and encouraging cooperative structures, whether that means collegial teams in inservice activities or teaching or learning teams in classrooms.

Do collaborative practices such as these lead to improved teaching and learning? To date few studies have examined this issue directly. But Rosenholtz's data, research on effective schools, and several studies of school improvement efforts point to a strong association between collaborative norms/practices and student achievement, school renewal, and teachers' openness to learning. Moreover, schools whose teachers cooperate with one another are characterized by cooperation among students.

Given the problems associated with past efforts at educational reform that have not focused on interactions among teachers at the school site, a strong case can be made that the fostering of collaborative norms and practices within the school well deserves attention by educators.

Chapter 2

The Principal's Role

If any one person can influence a school's norms, the principal is the individual in the best position to do so. As Edgar A. Kelley (1980) notes, the principal "is most responsible for the climate of the school and for the outcomes of productivity and satisfaction attained by students and staff. The simple truth is that others respond, directly or indirectly, to what the principal does as well as to what he does not do."

Because the principal's role in shaping a school's norms is so important, districts should take considerable care in matching the right principal with the right school. Bird and Little (1986) go so far as to say that "a principal can be assigned and supervised effectively only if district administrators go to a school, study its current condition, negotiate the assignment of a principal whose skills and experience apply directly to the present and intended condition of that school, and work directly with that principal to follow through."

The principal who wishes to encourage collaboration in his or her school can make use of a number of strategies, including advising teachers on their practice of teaching, running interference for teachers who desire to interact with one another, building collaborative processes into existing school structures, and modeling effective procedures of classroom observation and teacher evaluation.

Advising Teachers

One step a principal can take toward instituting collaborative norms is to be available when teachers need help in dealing with their classroom problems (of course, this assumes the principal has the skills needed to actually provide meaningful help). Doing so requires both tact and perseverance, inasmuch as teachers may be reluctant to admit that they have problems and may be skeptical about the principal's ability to solve them.

Once the staff come to perceive of the principal as a leader who can

help with their teaching problems, the rewards will be worth the effort required to reach this goal. When teachers grow accustomed to asking for and receiving useful advice from the principal, they become more receptive to the idea of asking one another for advice and giving it. Both Rosenholtz (1989) and Bird and Little (1985) found that schools characterized by a high degree of cooperation among the staff were also characterized by a high degree of interaction between staff and principal—with the latter kind of cooperation setting the stage for the former.

Running Interference and Providing Incentives

In addition to suggesting ways in which teachers can improve their teaching, the principal who wishes to promote collaboration must make sure that faculty members have the resources needed to make collaboration feasible. For example, a principal may decide to encourage the practice of having teachers plan lessons together. In that case, classes must be scheduled in such a way that teachers have time during the school day to meet.

The same applies when teachers wish to observe each other teach. The schedule must permit one teacher to be free while the other teaches, and vice versa. Both teachers must also be free at the same time to discuss the results of their observations. Allan Glatthorn (1984) recommends organizing peer observation teams at the end of the school year prior to the initiation of the teams so that "the school master schedule can reflect these observing and conferring needs."

In some instances, principals can use substitute teachers to give regular teachers more time for working together. H. Dickson Corbett and Joseph J. D'Amico (1986) point out, however, the potential drawbacks of this approach: "Teachers mistrust substitutes, feel more competent than the stand-ins, and regard time away from students as time stolen from teaching."

One way principals can alleviate the problems posed by using substitutes is for the principals and their assistants to act as replacement teachers. Bruce Wells, principal of North High in the Worchester (Massachusetts) Public Schools, reports that he and his assistants have frequently stepped in to teach for faculty members participating in study teams at the University of Massachusetts. As Carolyn L. Ruck (1986) points out, this practice helps to cut costs and also helps to keep principals in touch with students and the classroom environment.

It may well be that, in most schools, the principal cannot take time away from other activities to serve as a replacement teacher. Ruck says that most of the principals whom she interviewed would like to spend more time in the classroom but believe they cannot do so and still take care of their other obligations. Yet it is difficult to see how a principal can function effectively as an instructional leader if he or she is denied the time to engage occasionally in instruction.

The principal's role as a support person need not be limited to remov-

ing barriers that impede collaboration among faculty members; the principal can also provide incentives that serve to recognize and reward such collaboration. Ruck suggests that, when allocating funds for new materials, preference might be given to teachers actively engaged in collaborative practices. Similarly, when allocating funds for field trips, preference might be given to those trips that involve two or more teachers working together on a project.

Other, less material, rewards can also work as incentives to promote collaboration. As Ruck points out, "The message 'You're doing a great job' is not one that teachers hear often." Simply complimenting teachers for their efforts at working together can serve as a powerful reinforcer, she says.

Corbett and D'Amico suggest that principals can facilitate improved teaching by employing what T. Peters and R. Waterman (*In Search of Excellence*, 1982) call "management by wandering around." Instead of relying solely on formal channels of communication to keep track of staff performance, the manager who employs this technique "learns what staff members are doing and stimulates desired behavior through daily circuits around the work place," Corbett and D'Amico state.

"Management by wandering around" would seem to be particularly appropriate for principals who desire to encourage collaboration in their schools. When the principal engages in frequent informal exchanges with teachers that are focused on instructional matters, teachers are encouraged to engage in such exchanges among themselves.

Modifying School Structures

A quick way to get at the heart of collaboration is directly to encourage teachers to work with one another. Indeed, Richard and Patricia Schmuck suggest that the "principal has more power over modifying the structures and procedures of the school then he or she has over modifying the norms of the school." Rather than becoming frustrated at being unable to change a school's norms, the principal can simply institute structures that promote cooperation.

One such structure is the faculty meeting, which, say the Schmucks, provides a variety of opportunities to foster collaboration. First, the staff could be encouraged to submit, well in advance of the meeting, issues they feel should be considered. The principal could then use this input in shaping the meeting's agenda. Consequently, the meeting would have a shared agenda—one that addresses the concerns of the principals and of the faculty.

Second, the agenda could be distributed to faculty members well before the meeting. In this way, they would have an opportunity to discuss the issues with one another beforehand.

Third, the principal can involve the faculty in running the meeting. Instead of having the principal chair the meetings, the task can be rotated among the faculty members.

Although none of the steps suggested above is particularly daring, together they can help transform the faculty meeting from an instrument through which the principal promulgates policy into an instrument through which the faculty as a whole, with the principal as leader, develops policy.

The faculty committee is another vehicle that can be used to encourage collaboration among the staff, the Schmucks claim. If the committee members perceive that they are actually expected to study a problem and come up with solutions and if they perceive that their recommendations will be taken seriously, then the committee will actively work together and—in the process—encourage norms of collaboration.

Roland Barth (1986) writes that, when he was a principal, he provided time at the beginning of each faculty meeting to highlight teacher achievements. He also rotated the location of faculty meetings so that each teacher had an opportunity to serve as host, sharing with the rest of the faculty unique features of his or her curriculum or classroom activities. A variation of this approach, practiced by a principal described by Ruck, is to set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to describe inservices they have attended, innovations they have introduced into their classrooms, and the like.

Observing and Evaluating Teachers

In the introduction, we listed what Judith Warren Little (1982) called the "critical practices of adaptability" that were encouraged by norms of collaboration. One of these critical practices is providing teachers with frequent and useful critiques of their teaching. In a school with highly developed norms of collaboration, such critiques can frequently be supplied by a teacher's colleagues. Where such norms have not already been developed, the principal must take the lead in conducting frequent and useful classroom observations and evaluations of his or her staff. As we have seen, such assistance by the principal encourages teachers, in turn, to assist one another.

Requirements for Success

It should be emphasized that frequency of evaluation is not a sufficient condition: for evaluations to be useful, teachers must perceive that the evaluations actually help them to improve in their work. According to Tom Bird and Judith Warren Little (1985), reciprocity between the principal and the teacher must prevail if observation and evaluation for instructional improvement are to be meaningful. Such reciprocity requires the following conditions:

1. "The observer must assert the knowledge and skill needed to help a practitioner of a complex art."
2. "The teacher must defer in some way to the observer's assertion,"

that is, the teacher must accept the observer's claim to possess the skill and knowledge needed to help the teacher.

3. "The observer must display the knowledge and skill which s/he necessarily asserts."
4. "The teacher must respond to the observer's assertions, at least by trying some change in behavior, materials, role with students, or perspective on teaching."
5. "The observer's performance must improve along with the teacher's, and by much the same means: training, practice, and observant commentary from someone who was present."

The principal who hopes to use observation and evaluation to help teachers improve must expect to expend considerable time and energy in doing so. In those schools studied by Bird and Little that had strong programs of observation and evaluation, the principals had done considerable reading to improve their knowledge of teaching and of observation and evaluation practices, and they had taken the time to attend training sessions in these areas. In one junior high school, each of the forty-five teachers was observed by the principal or vice-principal for five successive days in the fall and five successive days in the spring.

After a principal has successfully established observation by administrators as a tool for helping teachers to improve, the path has been cleared for introducing peer observation. Bird and Little found that in schools where teachers thought that observation by the principal had helped them to improve, they were receptive to observing and being observed by their colleagues. Again, time and energy are necessities: teachers cannot be expected to meet the requirements of reciprocity outlined above unless they have some preliminary training in observation and in providing useful commentary on what they have observed.

Peer Coaching

According to Robert J. Garmston (1987), the first step in implementing a peer coaching program is the selection of a coaching model—technical, collegial, or challenge—best suited to the particular goals of the school and the particular needs of the school's faculty. After a model has been selected, the principal can support peer coaching by demonstrating that he or she considers coaching important, providing a focus for coaching activity, providing training for coaches, and modeling positive coaching behaviors.

Garmston mentions several practical ways in which principals demonstrate the importance they attach to peer coaching and model positive coaching behaviors. For example, they can provide time at faculty meetings for teachers to share their ideas about coaching and allow coaching teams to get together during time that would otherwise be spent on full-scale faculty meetings. And principals can model positive coaching behaviors by solicit-

ing staff critiques of faculty meetings (in effect, letting himself or herself be coached by the faculty) and by "shadowing" other principals. That is, the principals of two schools can take turns observing each other in action and coaching each other.

Peer Observation

What Garmston says about the principal's role in peer coaching also applies to the principal's role in peer observation. It is important for the principal to demonstrate that he or she considers peer observation important, to provide a focus for observations, to provide adequate training, and to model positive observation behaviors.

Ruck encourages principals to implement peer observation procedures that follow the clinical supervision model, where the emphasis is on reinforcing a teacher's strengths rather than pointing out his or her weaknesses and where the individual being evaluated has a voice in deciding what aspects of his or her classroom performance are to be evaluated. In the early stages of a peer observation program when teachers may be nervous about observing and being observed by one another, the principal can help put together pairs of teachers who will feel comfortable with each other. If conflicts arise, the principal can act as a counselor to help the parties work out their differences.

Bird and Little's principle of reciprocity mentioned earlier has applications that go far beyond the areas of observation and evaluation. To effectively introduce collaborative norms into a school, a principal must be an effective teaching leader. This means that he or she must assert and display the mastery of teaching and the leadership that entitle him or her to lead the staff through a period of change. Similarly, the staff must accept and respond to the principal's efforts to initiate changes. And, in the overall effort to institute norms of collaboration, the principal's skills at leadership must grow along with the teachers' skills at teaching.

Preparing for a Collaborative Style of Leadership

The shift from an authoritarian or a bureaucratic mode of leadership to a collaborative one is not an easy step for many school administrators to take. One mistake is to change too quickly one's leadership style. The administrator should adapt his or her style of leadership to the situation in the school over time, taking into account such factors as teachers' unity, expertise, and readiness to assume increased responsibility for decisions. Some teachers, comfortable in their isolation and autonomy, will feel threatened when the principal suddenly announces they must now critique one another's teaching or take a more active role in deciding school issues.

One effective way to prevent teachers' anxiety from mounting is to precede the introduction of collaborative leadership and structures with an effort to clarify and emphasize the school's purpose. Rosenholtz (1989)

found that teachers' anxiety was lowest and their cooperation in school improvement was greatest when they clearly understood and rallied around their school's goals. With their attention and energies focused on a common objective, teachers were more open to criticism from their peers and more willing to help one another improve their practice.

Once the faculty has embraced the school's mission, then the principal can explain that the most effective means for marshalling the school's resources toward fulfillment of that mission is a collaborative approach, which will involve a change in everyone's roles.

Leading Versus Imposing

At all stages the wise principal is careful to distinguish between leading the way toward collaboration and imposing collaboration on the faculty. Terry M. Wildman and Jerry A. Niles (1987) describe the essential nature of collaboration in the following terms:

> Collaboration naturally complements autonomy. Freedom to direct one's own learning is a vital aspect of collaboration. Collegial groups must be flexible in their composition and purpose. They must form and disintegrate based on the needs of individual teachers. And it is teachers who must decide on the specifics of their collaboration. Control of collegiality, either externally or hierarchically, is antithetical to the basic concept. Professionals cannot be forced to be collegial.

According to Michael Fullan (1985), "Successful change involves pressure, but it is pressure through *interaction* with peers and other technical and administrative leaders" (his emphasis).

Sharing his "simple recipe" for the development of a teaching clinic similar to Pittsburgh's Schenley's High School Teacher Center, Lawrence E. Davis (1986) advises administrators to adopt a caring attitude:

> Personal talks with individual teachers exploring this new dimension in professionalism are important. Group feedback sessions to monitor the feelings of participants, as they experience the trials and tribulations of growth are essential.

Will an administrator who adopts a collaborative style be perceived by colleagues and some subordinates as weak or ineffective? Perhaps so, initially. Charol Shakeshaft (1987), speaking about issues facing women administrators, notes that those "who manage from a collaborative framework do so in a system that stresses the value of competitive individualism and personal achievement at the expense of community goals." Conceding the reality of such a system, effective women leaders "often report that they first establish themselves and then introduce participatory styles," Shakeshaft says. While preparing their staffs for collaborative approaches, women leaders acknowledge that they were mistaken, at first, for weak administra-

tors. "Nevertheless," Shakeshaft asserts, "the research offers overwhelming evidence that women's collaborative style works best and over the long haul is instrumental in women being rated as effective leaders."

Blending Collaborative and Assertive Approaches

The collaborative approach to leadership is not intended to work in all schools all the time. Kenneth Tewel, principal of Brooklyn's George Westinghouse Vocational and Technical High School, explains that schools go through several stages of development requiring different leadership styles. Quoted in "The Urban School Principal: The Rocky Road to Instructional Leadership" (*Carnegie Quarterly*, Winter 1986), Tewel points out that some situations call for authoritarian approaches, whereas others call for a more collaborative style. The problem is that many principals get stuck in one style of leadership and run into trouble:

> A lot of leaders can't shift their mode of leadership to fit changed circumstances. They carry their battlefield mentality into less critical phases of the school's evolution. As a result, they are unprepared to assume a more moderate, collaborative mode once the school is past crisis. This can create fissures within the school community, blocking further innovation.

Long after a school's faculty have taken on increased responsibility for school improvement and their own professional growth, some situations will still call for directive, assertive leadership. Dale Mann (1986) points out the flaws of school improvement efforts that rely strictly on voluntary participation by teachers. Mann advises administrators to operate with "a complete repertoire" of leadership strategies—the soft, voluntary techniques as well as the hard, assertive approaches. "In the absence of cooperation and where reasonable persuasion does not avail, the exercise of leadership may end with the assertion of power, that is, the leader requiring the follower to do what the follower would not otherwise have done."

Again, we are reminded that collaboration is but one means to achieve quality schools and that, depending on the circumstances, there are other, equally valid means to achieve the same end. Nor are those means mutually exclusive. Principals can delegate responsibility for some issues to teachers and on other issues insist that teachers follow their direction.

Chapter 3

Districtwide Strategies

Thus far we have focused on the principal's role in encouraging collaboration and leading the collaborative school. In this chapter, we discuss methods of encouraging collaborative endeavors that require extensive initiative and support from the school district's central office.

Four programs that seek school improvement through a process of building collegiality and cooperation among school staff are described. These programs have in common the following three strategies: assessing the school's culture and the ways in which that culture does or does not serve the needs of the school's population, identifying norms that need to be changed, and determining specific steps to take to improve those norms.

Reaching Success Through Involvement

Reaching Success through Involvement (RSI) is a strategy for initiating change at the school building level developed at Vanderbilt University. By 1986 RSI had already been implemented in fourteen schools in five states and was being introduced in twenty-eight additional schools in five other states.

As explained by Willis J. Furtwengler (1986), RSI is a long-term (twelve to thirty-six month) strategy for school improvement. Its eleven steps run from recognition by the principal and assistant principals of their responsibility for the school's overall effectiveness, through formation of a planning council, development of inservice programs, collection of data to assess progress being made, and (at the end of each year) election of new members of the planning council.

Perhaps the most striking features of RSI are (1) its focus on continuous planning and action throughout the school year and (2) its emphasis on involvement of participants from all segments of the school community. Thus, the planning council (consisting of administrators and faculty members) and a student leadership group take part in a three-day retreat to focus

on leadership training and problem-solving activities. At the retreat, task forces (with student representation) are formed to solve specific school problems. Each task force holds at least four half-day meetings during the school year to assess the progress it is making and determine what further work needs to be done.

Although RSI is a strategy focusing on improvement at the level of the individual school, it clearly requires strong support from the school district's central office if it is to work. It is difficult to see how RSI could work without the expenditure of considerable time by both administrators and faculty. Asking faculty members to use their "spare" time for the purpose would place an unfair burden on them and likely would incur their resentment. And if the time is to come from their regular working hours, substitutes must be provided or additional staff must be hired.

Organizational Development

Another comprehensive strategy for school improvement that encourages collaborative practices is organizational development (OD). As explained by Richard A. Schmuck and colleagues (1985), OD "is aimed at improving the ability of the subsystems of a school district to change themselves." Schmuck and his colleagues base their strategy on four postulates.

First, "Schools are constituted of components—individuals, facilities, books, and so on—which are further organized into subsystems."

Second, "As living systems, schools are goal-directed. Usually, however, the goals are stated so vaguely by school personnel that they cannot be recognized even when they are being reached." In many cases, a school's stated goals may be at variance with those goals that the school's activities actually promote. To the extent that this happens, the school must "either (1) live with the contradiction, (2) close off communication, which advertises the ambiguity, (3) change its proclaimed goals, or (4) change its behavior."

Third, schools, like other living systems, display varying degrees of openness in communication. Administrators may communicate with school boards, curriculum committees may be in touch with outside experts, and teacher organizations may be in contact with teacher organizations from outside the school or the district. Such contacts bring outside influences and ideas to bear within the organization. "Strain within schools occurs when one subsystem (such as the curriculum division) brings new practices into the district and another subsystem (such as a school building staff) resists trying the new practices."

Finally, "Schools maintain many resources and plans that at any one time are not being used." While these plans "will inevitably include a number of irrelevant or even potentially deleterious practices, a school can be adaptive only if it encourages the emergence of whatever resources exist for optimizing its educative functions."

Given the four postulates outlined above, it is not surprising that OD attempts to improve the ability of schools to change themselves through clarifying school goals, improving communication among various elements of the school community, and tapping the school's unused resources. To do so, OD employs the services of an outside facilitator, who works closely with the district's central office and the school's principal and faculty.

Three features of OD are especially worth noting. First, OD emphasizes the importance of developing a plan that fits the situation at a particular school. The facilitator must be satisfied that a particular plan will work before implementing it and must be prepared to monitor it and modify it as necessary.

Second, OD includes plans for terminating the consultation process when the consultant's services are no longer needed and for institutionalizing the changes that have been introduced. This includes training a cadre of school personnel to continue the work after the facilitator has gone.

Third, OD places a strong emphasis on encouraging and developing collaborative processes. Facilitators train participants in ways of better expressing themselves and listening to one another. The facilitators, through group discussions with participants, attempt to identify group norms, distinguishing between those that simply reflect current practices and those that describe how members of the school community would like things to be. For example, teachers may practice norms of isolation simply because that is the way things have always been done and each individual teacher is reluctant to be the first to do things differently. Through group discussions, each teacher may find that he or she is not the only one who would like to engage in more collaborative practices. Once group support for such practices becomes apparent, participation in such practices becomes much easier.

Although OD, like Reaching Success through Involvement, typically employs outside facilitators to work with members of a school's population, many OD principles and methods can be employed usefully by administrators who have no formal training in the subject. The handbook by Schmuck and colleagues provides considerable information along those lines.

Staff Development for School Improvement Program

A third program designed to encourage collaboration at the school building level is Wayne State University's Staff Development for School Improvement Program (SDSI), in which fifteen school district's were involved at last count. The program, as described by Burnis Hall (1986), involves a six-step process:

Readiness. After a facilitator from the program meets with the principal and faculty of the school to explain the program and answer questions about it, the faculty vote on whether or not to participate. The project moves forward only if 70 percent or more of the staff vote to participate.

Needs assessment. The "facilitator leads the staff through (a) diagnosis, (b) brainstorming, and (c) prioritizing activities to select school goals." After one or two goals have been selected by consensus, planning team members are selected to work on the building's plan.

Writing the plan. With the help of the university's facilitator and the school principal, the planning team writes up the plan, which specifies objectives, activities to be completed, persons responsible for the activities, evaluation plans for each objective, and costs. The plan is then discussed and modified by the school's faculty. Finally, the plan is examined, modified (if necessary), and approved by project staff members at Wayne State University.

Implementation. A building-level team consisting of the principal and faculty members implements and coordinates activities called for by the plan. These usually include "school visitations, workshops, classroom observations, student reward systems, curriculum development by committees, conferences, and materials preparation."

Evaluation. In this step, "formative (including implementation evaluation) and summative data are collected to monitor progress toward the school's goal."

Reassessment and continuation. The facilitator from the university and the school's staff examine the year's accomplishments, decide what they wish to accomplish in the following year, and develop a new plan for that year.

According to Hall, "Evaluations of the first three years of the SDSI process found that 82% or more of the teachers in each school observed improvements in knowledge, skills, communication, and participation in decision-making." Hall notes that, for this staff development program to succeed, the principal must emphasize that the project's goal is to encourage ongoing growth. If the principal does so and actively encourages teachers to share ideas with one another, the norms of collaboration established through the program will continue after the original program has been completed.

Pittsburgh's Teaching Clinic

Another ambitious program to break down the barriers that isolate teachers is the Schenley High School Teaching Center in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. Lawrence E. Davis (1986), associate director of staff development for the Pittsburgh Public Schools, explains that the teaching clinic at Schenley was designed to give all teachers in the district's secondary schools a periodic professional development experience. The center operates as a regular school but has a staff that includes a specially trained clinic coordinator and two "clinical resident teachers" who have received extensive training in effective teaching. Recipients of the training are four "visiting teachers," who have been released from their regular assignments throughout the

district to attend the clinic.

Beatrice Ward (1985) and her colleagues, who also highlight this creative program in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, note that the clinical resident teachers "teach students for approximately three hours a day and devote the remainder of the time to conducting model lessons and to planning with, observing, and coaching the center's 'visiting teachers'."

Visiting teachers cycle in and out of the clinic on eight-week intervals. While at the clinic they participate in an intense process of peer observation. Under the leadership of the resident teachers, visiting teachers as a group observe one anothers' teaching and collaboratively analyze the data before giving feedback. In addition, each visiting teacher is coached by a resident teacher. "This one to one dialogue complements the skills and understandings nurtured in the teaching clinic," says Davis.

The visiting teachers at Schenley also receive about thirty hours of training in effective teaching. Designed to promote collegial relationships and dialogue, the training takes a variety of forms, as Davis notes:

> Daily professional seminars, peer conferences, externships, common workspaces, committee work, scheduled common preparation times and clinics all provide visiting teachers with opportunities for professional interaction.

Upon leaving the clinic, visiting teachers often state "that they valued most the opportunity for professional interaction with their peers," and many of them go on to initiate peer observations and feedback at their home schools. Principals in the district support these efforts, says Davis, "with creative scheduling, collaborative teacher projects, instructional cabinets, peer observation activities and teacher seminars."

Chapter 4

Planning, Resources, and Training

As we have seen, collaborative structures vary from comprehensive, districtwide strategies to simple changes in the way faculty meetings are run. Among the variables that govern the choice of a structure appropriate for a particular district or school are the perceived need for collaboration, the readiness of the faculty and administration for change, and the availability of any additional resources that will be needed to implement the structure. What may be desirable for one setting may not work well in another. And what may be desirable on its merits may, regrettably, be impractical, given the district's or school's financial resources.

This chapter examines such practical considerations as conducting a needs assessment; securing time, money, and training; and preparing for unforeseen problems.

Needs Assessment and Selection of Collaborative Structures

A beginning step is to assess where the district or school is on the continuum between isolated and collaborative. How often do teachers interact on educational issues? Do they have experience working together on school or instructional improvement? Do they observe one another teach and share strategies for improvement? Answers to questions such as these can help in assessing structures that would be appropriate.

Teachers and administrators who have had little experience with collegiality may need to be convinced of its benefits before new practices can be initiated. In such a case, it is best to start on a small scale, involving those personnel, including union representatives, who show interest. Their involvement in planning collaborative structures is itself a step toward collegi-

ality and a participative management style. Further, say Beatrice Ward and her colleagues, such involvement "demonstrates the seriousness of the school/school district's commitment to recognition and use of teachers' expertise."

A major drawback of many traditional teacher evaluation and professional development programs is that they are not linked with broader district and school improvement efforts. The goal in implementing a collaborative program should not be to produce collaboration for its own sake. Rather, it is best first to identify an important need in the school or district and then to select, with teachers, a collaborative activity that will fulfill that need. The activity and the collaboration it fosters are but means to achieve the instructional improvement or other goal desired.

Once the purpose is clarified, selection of an appropriate method can be made. To ascertain the track record of a particular collaborative approach to school improvement or professional development, a planning team could consult the research literature. In other schools where the program or structure has been implemented, what results have been obtained? How do teachers and administrators in those schools judge the program's effectiveness? Are data available that link the program to student achievement? If answers to these questions are not available in print, the team could visit schools operating the program to obtain the information first hand. Insights gained from site visits can not only help in deciding whether this structure will work for you, but also how it can best be implemented.

The Problem of Time

All parties should realize that introducing norms of collaboration is a process that takes place over time. Formal programs such as RSI and OD are designed to run for anywhere from one to three years. It may very well take that much time before such programs show visible results in the form of increased teacher collegiality, involvement in school governance, and faculty-management harmony. It may take even longer before those changes have any discernible effect on teachers' instructional effectiveness and student achievement. Hence, patience is a requisite in the effort to foster collaboration.

Introducing collaborative norms also takes time in another sense, as Bird and Little (1986) attest: "time for teachers to study, analyze and advance their practices; time for principals, department heads, and teacher leaders to support improvement; time for faculties to examine, debate, and improve their norms of civility, instruction, and improvement." Such time must come from somewhere. It is both unfair and unrealistic to expect teachers to somehow find the time for collaborative activities *and* continue to do everything they are expected to do already.

While acknowledging the difficulties involved in furnishing teachers with the time needed for collaborative endeavors, Terry M. Wildman and

Jerry A. Niles (1987) stress the importance of overcoming those difficulties:

> Finding more time for teacher growth obviously involves increased costs, but time-efficient staff development efforts that do not produce teacher learning are clearly not cost effective. Time for teacher learning is one of the most important investments a school system can make to maintain and improve quality educational programs.

According to the National Governors' Association's report *Time for Results*, "Schools typically spend about one-tenth what private industry devotes to development of personnel."

In a discussion of the time required for a collegial observation program, Susan Stavert Roper and David E. Hoffman (1986) argue that the real problem is one of priorities:

> Convincing the powers that be that teachers are professionals who learn best from one another is the central issue. In the financial crunch facing so many school districts it would seem easier to "sell" a program that does not require high priced consultations, expensive materials, and disruption of classes than the more typical inservice experience that often requires all three. Strange as it seems, districts will often pay the price for the legitimacy of the expensive "expert" rather than put those resources into using their own staff as experts. Lack of time is a symptom, not a cause, for the more basic problem of lack of support for collegiality.

In a study of teacher participation in school-level improvement programs, Judith A. Dawson (1984) compared the relative effectiveness of using noninstructional time (planning periods, lunch, and before and after school) and nondiscretionary time (scheduled for classroom instruction, faculty or department meetings, and inservice activities). Use of noninstructional time had several disadvantages:

> The length of time available was usually brief—one hour or less. Teachers felt rushed, could not block out other concerns and concentrate on planning, or were tired. Consequently, some planning sessions were relatively unproductive. Furthermore, teachers considered this non-instructional time discretionary and sometimes resented being asked to relinquish it.

Nondiscretionary time, on the other hand, required more resources but had several advantages:

> Usually, longer blocks of time were available for uninterrupted work. Participants were often more relaxed and productive. Teachers perceived the allocation of time to a new project as evidence of administrator commitment and were encouraged to continue their involvement.

Dawson reports that "nondiscretionary time had to be used judiciously" to avoid overreliance on substitutes. To reduce the amount of time required for the programs, schools spread the process over a longer period,

reducing the frequency of meetings; reduced the extent of participation, such as assigning initial planning to a core group; and replaced larger groups with multiple smaller groups that could meet at separate times.

Finances

In financial terms, the cost of implementing collaborative programs varies widely from program to program and district to district. The more comprehensive and elaborate the program, the more it can be expected to cost.

Judy A. Johnston, director of the Pittsburgh Public Schools' Schenley High School Teacher Center, places the cost of running the school as a teacher center (over and above the cost of a normal high school operation) at about 1.5 million dollars a year—or about 1.5 percent of the district's overall budget. Stressing that most of this cost is for the salaries of replacements (full-time district employees) for teachers attending the center, Johnston suggests that other districts might be able to find ways of achieving the same objectives while avoiding that cost. Other costs that derive from Schenley's operation as a professional development center include salaries for the director and her assistant, clerical salaries, seminar presenters' fees, and ongoing inservice, she said.

Two factors should be borne in mind when evaluating these costs. First, they are the costs of large-scale, districtwide programs; school-level innovations such as involving faculty in school improvement teams may require no financial expenditure. And second, programs such as the Schenley Teacher Center replace other, conventional staff development programs that also cost money.

A district can seek external sources of funding for programs that might capture people's imagination. Johnston explained that Schenley's startup costs of approximately $400,000 were borne largely through grants of various types.

If a district can't compensate teachers for all the time they spend on a collaborative activity, partial payment is better than none. The Auburn, New York, School District decided to compensate participants in its Professional Assistance Teams (based on the quality circle model) for four of the six hours they spend each month at team meetings (held when school is not in session so as not to interfere with the educational process). "Partial monetary compensation was considered a fair exchange" for participants' commitment to the program, say Rose M. Malanowski and her colleagues (1986).

Training

Another consideration in planning collaborative structures is the need for training in such skills as problem-solving, communication, and observa-

tion of classroom teaching. Although in some instances consultants may need to be hired, again a concerted effort can be made to identify capable trainers among the district's or school's staff.

Especially important is the proper training of teachers who are given responsibility for assisting other teachers. Davis (1986) reports that during the first three years of the Schenley Teacher Center's operation the leadership cadre received about sixty hours of training in addition to the initial basic training. The elements of this advanced training are as follows:

1. Teaching analysis skill development
2. Conferring skills
3. Group process
4. Group management/peer group feedback
5. Personality styles
6. Problem solving approaches
7. Introspection/when teachers face themselves
8. Adult learning theory
9. Effective schools research
10. Helping and collegial relationships
11. Effective questioning strategies
12. Eliciting and receiving feedback
13. Alternative methods of data collection
14. Conflict resolution/adult depression
15. Teacher diagnostic summary review

Instructional chairpersons and other key teachers in the Pittsburgh Public Schools are now being trained in these same areas. As Davis says, "It's truly important to have a cadre of teachers who are competent in coordinating their own professional development."

According to Robert J. Garmston (1987), good training for peer coaches "uses the best available information about adult learning; provides teachers with theory, information, and demonstrations; addresses teachers' concerns about giving and receiving feedback; and helps teachers develop and refine specific coaching skills." Peer coaching is a sufficiently complex skill that training should be provided to participants on an ongoing basis through refresher courses and followup sessions.

When the Auburn School District in upstate New York implemented its Professional Analysis Teams, the district committed itself to an extensive training effort to make sure the program worked. Malanowski and her colleagues point out that whereas quality circles in industry deal largely with matters of statistical quality control, problems in education are complex and

their solutions are not obvious. For this reason, the training of Auburn's Professional Analysis Teams focused on solution development. Participants were taught how to identify possible solutions and to evaluate and gather data.

Additional training was needed as the teams proceeded. At first, if team members identified several problems related to a common theme, they combined the problems in the attempt to find an overall solution. "For example," say Malanowski and her colleagues, "the problem with students being removed from class for special help was linked to the problem of poor study skills and remediation activities." Team members had to be given special training to "think not in common themes but rather in terms of dividing an issue into its various parts."

Preparing for Unforeseen Problems

Superintendents, principals, and teachers who introduce collaborative structures into their schools should realize that it is unlikely everything will work out exactly as planned. As is the case when introducing any innovation, unforeseen needs will arise that require modification of programs.

Kay Mitchell, director of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg (North Carolina) School District's Teacher Career Development Program, says that the program originally proceeded on the assumption that outstanding teachers with the most experience would be best suited to the role of mentor teachers. Subsequently, it was discovered that good teachers with only five to ten years of experience made the best mentors. These teachers were closer in age to the individuals they were mentoring, and thus their relationships were more comfortable. Further, they were still sufficiently close to their own experiences as beginners to retain a vivid memory of what new teachers face.

Another unforeseen problem the Charlotte-Mecklenburg program encountered was that some teachers who were chosen to be mentors because of their exemplary performance actually turned out to be "tormentors," as Mitchell put it. When put in a position of power over interns, they became excessively critical and abused their authority in other ways as well. Now members of the team are alert for this possibility so as to nip it in the bud.

The fine-tuning of another teacher mentor program is described by David L. Huie and colleagues (1986), who evaluated the Intern-Mentor Program of the District of Columbia Public Schools after its first year of operation. One problem concerned the number of interns (ten) originally assigned to each mentor. Because mentors showed signs of burnout, the evaluators recommended that the number of interns per mentor be reduced to eight. Because the mentors spent much time locating or making instructional materials for their interns, Huie and his coauthors also recommended that the district supply mentors with improved office support and teaching resources.

Summary

Developing and introducing new practices can itself be a collaborative process, involving teachers, principals, and (depending on the scope of the program or structure) administrators at the district and state levels. However, collaboration on such a large scale may not always be feasible; teachers may initially be reluctant to work in close cooperation with their principal, and administrators and policy-makers at the district and state levels may be hesitant to embark on programs that appear to involve expending funds that taxpayers are unwilling to provide.

In introducing collaboration, as in implementing any reform, it is helpful to know what others have done before. Therefore, this chapter has included numerous examples of schools and school districts that have already implemented collaborative practices. As these examples show, a variety of circumstances can provide the impetus toward collaboration; a diverse set of strategies can be used to bring about collaboration; unanticipated problems can arise when a school or district first begins to adopt collaborative practices; and creative, dedicated leadership makes the difference in overcoming these problems.

Conclusion

In several respects, introducing collaboration into a school or a school district resembles any other efforts at school reform. The essential ingredients in such efforts are an accurate assessment of the school's or district's needs and resources and the ability to enlist the support of all appropriate personnel. Programs launched before these steps are taken will almost certainly end in failure.

These similarities are true, however, only of the implementation of schoolwide or districtwide programs that induce teachers and administrators to collaborate on such tasks as school improvement, curriculum development, or peer review. Although formal efforts to encourage collaboration may be appropriate in some schools and districts, other educators may prefer a less structured approach. A single teacher, for instance, can take the first step simply by consulting with a colleague about a problem in his or her classroom. A principal who wants to encourage the faculty to interact about instructional matters can set an example by routinely seeking the advice of individual teachers or of the faculty as a whole. These efforts incur no costs—except psychological ones for those who risk challenging norms of isolation—and they are the most direct route to the goal of a collaborative work environment. Even the structured approaches can be considered successful only to the extent they encourage educators to engage in frequent, informal discussion about the practice of their craft.

Because collaboration ultimately depends on voluntary, informal actions, perhaps the biggest obstacle to collaboration in schools is complacency. Teachers and administrators must first be convinced that the isolation of teachers in their classrooms is short-changing both those who work in schools and those who are taught there. In the absence of such conviction, it will be easy to dismiss collaboration as too time consuming, costly, or disruptive of the status quo. Perhaps the most important prerequisites for introduction of collaborative norms and practices, therefore, are that the school's principal and faculty share a vision for an alternative work environment and are willing to devote their energies, expertise, and resources to see that vision fulfilled in their midst.

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